

THE LETTER KILLETH

2 Cor. 3:1-11

Judaizers quick to point out that Paul not have letters of recommendation.

2 Cor 3:1 ...*commend* exhibit; introduce; praise our- selves; to qualify

Do we need to send you written credentials of recommendation?

Wiersbe: *It is a sad thing when a person measures his worth by what people say about him instead of by what God knows about him. ...*

2 Cor 3:2 We have credible recommendation to validity of our ministry: you!

2 Cor 3:3 God changes a person --heart. Ezek 36:26-27

Barnett: *True Christianity is not a veneer of morality glued on to the exterior of our lives, but a profound change of heart, mind and will which is then expressed in outward behaviour. The word of God changes individuals, in the context of Christian fellowship, from the inside out.*

2 Cor 3:4 We have trust (reliance, confidence) in God to follow through on His promises.

2 Cor 3:5 *Sufficient*: qualified, fit, adequate, equipped, powerful enough

To think anything as of ourselves: form opinion concerning ourselves

Our sufficiency (competency, adequacy) *is of God*. God only one adequate to do any thing of lasting spiritual value in lives...in hearts.

When emphasize external as end to righteousness – pride. 1 Cor 15:10; 2 Cor 4:7; 12:9; Phil 3:3

2 Cor 3:6 *Able ministers*: Qualified table waiters; attendants

New testament: Covenant, agreement between human beings and God;

Letter: writing, law of Moses

What makes able minister of NT? The spirit...inner man... supernatural transformation of heart. The law condemns, destroys

The New Covenant of Grace (personal relationship with Jesus Christ) gives *Life* (vitalize, quicken; real life, eternal life). Rom 7:12

Hughes: ... *under the former that law is written on tablets of stone, confronting man as an external ordinance and condemning him because of his failure through sin to obey its commandments, whereas under the latter the law is written internally within the redeemed heart by the dynamic regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, so that through faith in Christ, the only law-keeper, and inward experience of His power man no longer hates but loves God's law and is enabled to fulfil its precepts.*

Letter of the Law: External, outward, standards of holiness.

Spirit of the law: Internal, inward, supernatural transformation from heart.

Wiersbe: *There never was a standard that could transform a person's life, and that includes the Ten Commandments. Only the grace of God, ministered by the Spirit of God, can transform lost sinners into living epistles that glorify Jesus Christ* Rom 7:6; 8:2-4

Obey law of God? Yes! God's moral law!

Able to do so? No.

God given us law in hearts... Holy Spirit helps us Phil 3:5-7

1 Tim 1:13 Paul had it all together externally but not internally

Hughes: *Outward conformity to the law had been a hypocritical cloak covering the inward corruption of his heart. It was by faith in Christ alone and the operation of the Holy Spirit's grace in his heart that it became possible for him to conform inwardly, in spirit, as well as outwardly, in letter, to the demands of the law...*

Exposition of Ex. 34:29-32

2 Cor 3:7-8 If that happened to Moses at giving of the law, glory! Holy Spirit gives real life.

2 Cor 3:9 Wiersbe: *The Law was not given for the purpose of salvation, for there is no salvation through obedience to the Law. The Law produces condemnation, and is the mirror that reveals how dirty our faces really are. But we cannot wash our faces in the mirror.*

The ministry of the New Covenant produces righteousness and changes lives to the glory of God. Man's greatest need is righteousness, and God's greatest gift is righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ.

2 Cor 3:10 The radiance observed in face of Moses was awesome but not in comparison with glory and splendor of gospel of Jesus Christ

Paul made a minister of new covenant and its glory--so much more in comparison to the glory of the OT law.

2 Cor 3:11 The Old covenant that faded into nothing was full of God's glory. Much more, then, the glory of God's new plan of salvation is far greater. It is eternal

So What?

The ministry of Grace:

1. Internal..Lives changed from inside out.
2. Gives real life : our real sufficiency is of God
3. Superior glory to Law.
4. We can speak openly about it. vv12-18